

Add new claims 36 to 53 as follows:

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----36. Isolated viral interleukin-6 (v-IL-6) obtained by recombinant expression of the DNA of human herpes virus type 8 ("HHV-8") in an isolated cell.

37. An isolated polypeptide obtained by recombinant expression of the DNA of HHV-8 in an isolated cell, and which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

38. An isolated polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

39. A fragment of v-IL-6 that binds an interleukin-6 ("IL-6") receptor and comprises the amino acid sequence (residues 87-105 of SEQ ID NO:2) GFNETSCLKKLADGFFEFE.

40. A fragment as claimed in claim 39, which consists of the amino acid sequence GFNETSCLKKLADGFFEFE.

41. A fragment as claimed in claim 39, which binds to a human IL-6 receptor.

42. A fragment obtained from the human viral interleukin-6 (v-IL-6) of claim 36 that binds to the IL-6 receptor and which can competitively inhibit the biological activity of IL-6 in a suitable assay system wherein the fragment binds to the receptor.

43. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising the sequence SEQ ID NO:1 and that encodes v-IL-6.

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44. An isolated nucleic acid as described in claim 43, consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1.

45. An isolated peptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2 and obtained by recombinant expression of a DNA as described in claim 43 in an isolated cell.

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46. An isolated nucleic acid molecule, hybridizing under stringent conditions to the nucleic acid as claimed in claim 44, encoding functional v-IL-6, wherein the nucleic acid encodes functional v-IL-6.

47. A test kit for the detection of v-IL-6 DNA or RNA, comprising a nucleic acid molecule consisting of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 as claimed in claim 43.

48. A composition comprising as an active ingredient the polypeptide as claimed in claim 37 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

49. A composition comprising as an active ingredient the nucleic acid as claimed in claim 43 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

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50. A cell culture growth medium, comprising v-IL-6 as claimed in claim 45.

51. A fragment of a polypeptide that is obtainable by recombinant expression of the DNA of HHV-8 in an isolated cell and which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

52. A method of culturing cells in a medium using v-IL-6, comprising the step of adding v-IL-6 to the medium.